

Interpreter Call Center

Fort Wayne Community Schools are Making it Happen!



WE ARE Fort Wayne Community Schools, an urban school corporation of nearly 30,000 students. The student population in our 51 schools is diverse, and 66% of students receive free or reduced lunch.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES speak 75 languages and come from 61 different countries. Students with a language other than English in their home or background make up 17% of our student population. Our teachers, administrators and other staff members value the personal connections they make with families of all backgrounds.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE of creating an interpreter call center grew from the need to facilitate communication with our multilingual families when no interpreter was on site in a school. All of our schools sometimes need to include interpreters in their communication with families. Our highest-incidence languages are Spanish and Burmese.

OUR STEPS included stationing four of our part-time interpreters, two Spanish speakers and two Burmese speakers, in a newly-established interpreter office so that we could cover interpreting needs in these languages during most business hours. In addition, we have six other part-time Spanish interpreters who serve groups of schools on site, and we maintain a list of as-needed interpreters for many languages. The Spanish and Burmese interpreters in the call center interpret by phone, usually via conference call, when contacted by FWCS personnel or families. They also complete written translations and schedule interpreters for conferences and events for Spanish, Burmese and other languages.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

"I couldn't function without the call center interpreters. When dealing with medical issues, you have to have that piece of the puzzle to communicate immediately." Anna Hartman, school nurse

"It is a good service for parents because it facilitates communication with our children's schools. It makes us feel more in contact with what is happening, even though we don't speak the language." Janeth Menendez, parent

"Making a conference call with the interpreters is very helpful to make sure everyone understands each other and the communication is made right then." Deborah Keisler, school secretary

"We are the link that makes communication possible between the schools and parents and the community. We strive to make connections for all of them." Flor Guayamo, Spanish interpreter

For more information about our corporation, email: Emily.Keirns@fwcs.k12.in.us
or visit our website: www.fortwayneschools.org.